

Wednesday in the Word
Digging Deeper
March 24, 2021
1 Thessalonians 2:1-12
Unlocking a Gentle and Loving
Christian Life

As we have recently wrapped up the first chapter of 1st Thessalonians let's take a moment to look back at something interesting. Chapter 1 verse 10 speaks of the second coming of Christ. Paul surely did not divide his letters into chapters and yet we have found that he closes each chapter with a little encouragement of the second coming. Look ahead in chapter 2:19, 3:13. Notice especially the powerful message in 4:13-18 and finally 5:23. What do you think was on Paul's mind as he wrote this letter? Times were tough for him and his new pagan converts so keeping their eyes to the skies gave them courage to continue in the faith. Luke 21:24-28. You will find much the same Second Coming Encouragement in 2nd Thessalonians as well. Let's now look through our text for today starting in **2:1** Paul takes note that the time he spent before the Thessalonians was fruitful and worthwhile. Same for you. Your time is not spent in vain as you share the gospel even though few seem to care. Galatians 6:9. Paul in verse **2** recounts the hardship and persecution he endured in Philippi as he headed for Thessalonica. These events are recorded in Acts 16:19-40. Continuing on through Acts we see that Paul's troubles didn't end there. Boldness in Christ got him through. Verse **3** makes sense. Who would endure such tribulation only to preach out of a selfish or harmful motive? Our first key to the Christian's success appears in verse **4**. We are allowed by God to be entrusted with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Greek for this word 'allowed' is dokimazō; to test (literally or figuratively); by implication to approve: - allow discern examine. Thayer's Definition; to test, examine, prove, scrutinise (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals to recognise as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy. It seems from this definition that our portrayal of the offer of salvation through Christ is in part, testing us to prove whether our faith is genuine. How confidently do you share the love of Christ? Is your walk with Jesus secure enough that you are comfortable sharing Him with others? The boldness Paul speaks of in verse 2 was the result of the power of God, not some level of human strength drummed up from within. It can be scary being bold in Christ but fully trusting Him overrides our fears. God's test on our hearts reveals to us the level of fear we have of man, in contrast to our trust in God. Verses **5-6** speak to the pretentious side of preaching. This could condemn any of us who have shared the gospel. We may have fallen to the spell of using the story of Christ to find a feigned agreement with other faiths or envy of other Christians or especially of trying to look sophisticated in our bible knowledge. **7**. Our next key. The Greek for 'gentle' is ēpios; properly affable that is mild or kind: - gentle. The root to epios has to do with "a softly spoken word" as a maternity nurse would address a newborn or as a loving father speaks with his children in verse 11. Moving on we look at the word 'cherisheth', 'an thalpo' in the Greek. This is a 'supposition to foster' as a nurse takes on the responsibility to care for a baby as if he were her own. In Paul's view, his new Thessalonian believers were not his direct children but he "nursed" them as if they were. Our love for new believers must be especially gentle and affectionate in keeping with the fragile state of their recent birth through the Holy Spirit. **V8**. A third key. We cannot stop at the gospel. We must hold strongly to the "follow up of fellowship". The giving of our soul means we care deeply

enough for others that we spend time with them and devote to them our desire to see them rooted, grounded and growing in Christ. Ephesians 3:14-19. **V9-10.** Paul reminds them of his hard labor for their welfare so he would not burden them in any way. He alludes to this later in 4:11-12 basically restating his point from their perspective. We see here that we ought to expect nothing to profit ourselves from others but to live sacrificially for them. Romans 12:1. This is referring to our conduct toward God and man. Not as easy as is stated but commanded by God speaking through Paul. **V11-12.** Our last key to unlocking a gentle and loving Christian life. We more mature followers of the Lord Jesus must exhort, comfort and charge our new fellows so they might learn to "walk worthy of God". The true power of God will have a life changing effect on people. We must encourage and expect it. Let's dig into these last three Greek definitions. To exhort is *parakaleō*; to call near; used as a name for the Holy Spirit Who is called near to us by Christ. John 14:16. We come near to others to urge their growth as the Spirit does for us. To comfort is *paramytheomai*; to relate near that is (by implication) encourage, console: to comfort. Similar to the previous word but rather than being called near we relate near. If being called near is part 1 then relating is part 2. Come near to others to find common ground in love as Jesus did for us. John 19:26-27. Finally, to charge is *martureō*; to be a witness that is to testify, to charge, give evidence, bear record. This is our word, 'martyr'. By testifying to what we've done and seen in our own lives, we can direct a new believer to move forward in faith and courage. Work hard, care and encourage those to whom God has entrusted His glorious gospel. We are a part of a much bigger eternal plan and passing it on is a responsibility and a privilege. We now know we have the keys to the Kingdom. Matthew 16:19.